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Speed Changing Pulley (later DeTamble Motors) Company factory
Anderson
Madison County
Indiana

Photographs and
Written and Historical data
REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service

Department of Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

DeTamble
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

Speed Changing Pulley Company Factory

(DeTamble Motors)

HAER IN-36

Location:	Anderson, Indiana UTM: 16.610950.4441010 Quad: Anderson, South
Date of Construction:	1908
Present Owner:	National Tile Company
Significance:	In order to offset a regional economic decline, Anderson's business community organized the Commercial Club in 1905. The Speed-Changing Pulley Company (later DeTamble Motors) was the first firm attracted to Anderson by the Commercial Club bonus scheme and the first to build and occupy a factory.
Historian:	Donald Sackheim Robert Rosenberg

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Anderson, along with many other cities in east-central Indiana, enjoyed a period of rapid and dramatic growth following the discovery of huge fields of natural gas in the last decades of the nineteenth century.[1] With the depletion of inexpensive fuel supplies at the beginning of the twentieth century, the economy of the region declined. The Commercial Club of Anderson, organized in 1905, met the crisis by attracting new industry to the city. In 1908, the Club adopted the Watkins Lot Plan; its effect was to give a cash bonus to industry which located in Anderson.[2] The Speed Changing Pulley Company, Later the DeTamble Motors Company, was the first company attracted to Anderson under the bonus scheme.

DeTamble Motors shared several characteristics with the Rider-Lewis Motor Company (HAER IN-38) which was also brought to Anderson by the Commercial Club. Both companies manufactured automobiles; both went bankrupt; and both used a single story design in the construction of their factories. While single-story construction was not unique in the automobile industry at the time, it was progressive, and the fact that the buildings survived long after the firms that built them went bankrupt attests to their adaptability as industrial structures. The DeTamble factory is an example of simple utilitarian construction used in Indiana at the turn of the twentieth century.

The Union Embossing Machine Company and the Speed Changing Transmission Company, established in Indianapolis in 1882 and 1902 respectively, were the parent companies of the DeTamble Motors Company. In 1904, both companies were located at a factory at East Washington and Davidson Streets in Indianapolis. Edward S. DeTamble, president of the firms, began manufacturing gasoline engines in about 1904. DeTamble was approached by the Factory Committee of the Commercial Club in 1908, and after negotiations, signed a contract on 29 May 1908 to relocate his factory in Anderson. He was to receive \$50,000 in turn for which he agreed to certain stipulations, presumably that he would build in Anderson [3] and run it to the best of his ability, keeping the men of the town employed.

The site of the new factory north of 32nd Street, between East Lynn and Pitt Streets in Anderson, was originally part of the Pittsford Estate owned by a party named Worden. Proximity to the Big Four Railroad (today the New York Central) tracks which ran to the south of the plant, and the East Lynn Streetcar Line, were factors in the site selection; they facilitated the movement of men and material.[4] Construction at the site began on 30 June 1908 and was completed on 12 November 1908. [5]

Two days after completing the factory in Anderson, the Speed Changing Pulley Company required recapitalization. To this end, DeTamble issued \$350,000 in stock. He retained \$200,000 in

common stock to insure personal control and issued 100,000 shares of non-voting preferred stock to the public. It is likely that when DeTamble filed notice of an increase in capital stock and amendments to the articles of incorporation with the Secretary of State of Indiana in late December 1911 he also changed the name of his company from the Speed Changing Pulley Company to the DeTamble Motors Company. [6]

Throughout 1909 and into the summer of 1910 the financial outlook of the company appeared satisfactory. Under its different names--the Speech Changing Pulley and DeTamble Motors Company--Edward DeTamble's companies had been manufacturing chassis and engines for such firms as Studebaker, as well as turning out its own automobiles. In June 1909, DeTamble Motors contracted to supply the Speed Sales Company of Chicago with a minimum of 1,000 complete autos in addition to 2,500 engines.[7]

In late August the first glimmer of financial difficulty appeared on the horizon.[8] In mid-August 1910, another Chicago firm, the Car Makers Selling Company, offered to buy the DeTamble Motors Company. DeTamble and the Chicago Sales Company reached an agreement, and on 16 August 1910, DeTamble stepped down as president. Lewis Zinke assumed the presidency, and Charles DeTamble made plans to move to Los Angeles while the Car Makers Selling Company assumed control of Edward DeTamble's assets in Anderson. The factory--its buildings, grounds, and machinery--were valued at \$90,000 and DeTamble's private residence and lot were valued at \$10,000. On the credit side, Car Makers Selling Company looked forward to payment of the balance of \$32,000 from the Commercial Club's bonus scheme. Although the new officers claimed to be pleasantly surprised about sales prospects of their new product, the labor force of the plant was reduced.[9] By 3 September 1910 DeTamble had regained control of his company and resumed his place as president. According to reports, the Chicago group simply could not raise the funds necessary to buy DeTamble out, and though the same reports stressed that the rapid changes in ownership did not indicate any financial instability of DeTamble Motors, the report seems questionable in light of later developments.[10]

Ominous signs of the financial condition of DeTamble Motors appeared shortly after DeTamble resumed control. On 10 September 1910, the Anderson Morning Herald presumably made an oblique reference to the DeTamble Motors Company when it reported that the Commercial Club would work diligently to seek funds for rebates to aid factories in meeting their obligations. In less than a month, however, DeTamble Motors sought relief in court. On 5 October 1910 it was reported that DeTamble Company sued Alexander Jones of North Anderson to recover \$300 pledged to the Commercial Club.[11] It was the first suit brought on behalf of the Commercial Club, and it emphasized the financial uncertainty of DeTamble Motors.

Though DeTamble Motors was running full shifts at the beginning

of December, the company was in serious trouble. By the end of the month DeTamble met with the Commercial Club to obtain his bonus funds. In light of what was to occur subsequently, it is important to note the terms of the renegotiation bonus contract. Under the new contract DeTamble worked out with the Commercial Club, he took a house and lot valued at \$1,000 and the Commercial Club assumed payment of a \$5,000 loan negotiated by DeTamble to meet his operating expenses. DeTamble was freed from the stipulations of the original contract, and the Commercial Club was freed from paying \$6,000 of the original \$50,000 bonus. DeTamble did not receive any operating capital, the necessary ingredient to keep his firm solvent, though he was freed from the stipulations of the contract which, had he violated them, would have left him liable to be prosecuted for breach of contract.

On 3 February 1911 it was reported that DeTamble had nearly completed the sale of \$150,000 of stock to a group from Cleveland, and when he closed the deal DeTamble left town on a midnight train to Indianapolis, leaving no forwarding address. Within two weeks, DeTamble Motors was placed in receivership.[14]

During the procedures to recapitalize the company, which occurred on 16-17 February 1911, it came out that Edward DeTamble had assigned \$50,000 in common stock, the DeTamble bungalow in Anderson, and some property in Indianapolis to "Catherine DeTamble, his wife, of Wayne County, Michigan." The local newspaper was quick to point out that Edith DeTamble, who had lived with DeTamble for 16 years was not his wife and that when reports reached Catherine, his real wife, that Mr. DeTamble intended to sell the factory, she retained attorneys to look after her interests. In March 1911, it was reported that Edith DeTamble had joined Edward DeTamble in Los Angeles, where he had been making his home and selling automobiles.

On 17 February 1911 DeTamble Motors was declared out of receivership after \$100,000 had been subscribed by creditors and selling agents of the DeTamble Motors Company.[15] In April 1911 it appeared as though the company had recovered, since it was running a nearly full shift and was producing about 20 cars per day, but by 27 September 1912, the company was back in court.[16] It was the last time. Involuntary bankruptcy proceedings were heard in superior court and remanded to federal court for adjudication. On 6 November 1912, the DeTamble Motors factory, the first firm brought to Anderson by the Commercial Club, stood idle. It was the only idle factory in southeast Anderson.[17]

THE BUILDING

The DeTamble factory complex, located between East Lynn and Pitt Streets, originally contained at least three buildings: a main machine-assembly shop, a powerhouse, and an office.

The brick and steel machine shop measured 60 by 61 feet. It was known to have housed a brass goods department with automatic and turret lathes on the east end and a central section which contained the engine manufacturing and machine shops. For most of its length the structure was single-story, although there was a small second story near the middle of the building which housed the pattern makers shop.

The powerhouse, north of the machine shop, measured 53 by 34 feet. It contained a 160 horsepower Skinner stationary engine which powered a generator that delivered electric power directly to various parts of the factory, making line shafts and belts unnecessary. Presumably, the powerhouse was part of a larger structure which contained an engine-testing room in its west section and running to the east were: the blacksmith shop, a boiler room, then the power plant, and a brass and aluminum shop in the extreme eastern portion of the building.

On the southwest corner of the lot stood a two-story brick office building. The first floor contained offices for DeTamble, the bookkeeper, stenographers and department heads. Drafting and sales offices were on the second floor.

The complex was enlarged as additions were added. On 20 September 1910, work was well advanced on a painting and upholstery department which probably was located to the east of the powerhouse. It was of galvanized sheeting, painted red, and was 30 by 80 feet. The central building, shown in the drawing, lay between the main plant and the powerhouse, and was probably added after DeTamble Motors left the building because there is no prior record of a central building.

A 1936 photograph shows the complex with the sign "Anderson Mattress Co."

The building is presently being used as a warehouse for the National tile company.

DeTamble Motors

Notes

- 1 Outdoor Indiana, September 1973, pp. 4-11.
- 2 Indianapolis Star, December 27, 1908, p. 5.
- 3 Anderson Morning Herald April 17 1908 p. 1
November 14 1908 p. 2
December 24 1910 p. 1
- 4 Anderson Morning Herald April 22 1908 p. 1
- 5 Anderson Morning Herald June 30 1908
November 12 1908
- 6 Anderson Morning Herald November 14 1908
December 26 1908
Between November and December 1908, the Anderson Herald began to refer to Speed Changing Pulley Company as DeTamble Motors.
- 7 Anderson Morning Herald June 25 1907
- 8 Anderson Morning Herald August 12 1910 p. 1
August 17 1910 p. 1
- 9 Based upon newspaper accounts, the DeTamble factory employed the following:

Date	Number of Employees
30 June 1908	250 from Indianapolis
	425 anticipated once full capacity is reached
28 Jan. 1910	Almost 300
1 March 1910	Almost 200
27 April 1910	265
27 August 1910	90
4 Dec. 1910	Almost 200
20 April 1911	145
- 10 Anderson Morning Herald 3 September 1910 p. 1
7 September 1910 p. 8
- 11 Anderson Morning Herald 6 October 1910 p. 1
- 12 Anderson Morning Herald 24 December 1910 p. 1
- 13 Anderson Morning Herald 3 February 1911 p. 8
- 14 Anderson Morning Herald 17 February 1911 p. 1

- 15 Anderson Morning Herald 18 February 1911 p. 1
- 16 Anderson Morning Herald 20 April 1911 p. 4
27 September 1912 p. 10
- 17 Anderson Morning Herald 6 November 1912 p. 10
- 18 Information on original structures can be found in the following
accounts:
Anderson Morning Herald 22 April 1908 p. 1
29 May 1908 p. 1
16 June 1908 p. 1
30 June 1908 p. 1
14 November 1908 p. 2
11 November 1909 p. 1
20 October 1910 p. 4

DeTamble Motors

Bibliography

Outdoor Indiana. September 1973, V. 38

Indianapolis Star. 27 December 1908.

Anderson Morning Herald.

17 April 1908
5 May 1908
19 May 1908
21 May 1908
29 May 1908
7 June 1908
16 June 1908
30 June 1908
2 July 1908
22 July 1908
12 November 1908
14 November 1908
18 November 1908
26 December 1908
25 June 1909
11 November 1909
26 December 1909
28 January 1910
1 March 1910
9 April 1910
27 April 1910
7 August 1910
11 August 1910
12 August 1910
17 August 1910
27 August 1910
3 September 1910
7 September 1910
10 September 1910
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4 December 1910
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3 February 1911
17 February 1911

18 February 1911
22 February 1911
24 February 1911
12 March 1911
20 April 1911
14 September 1912
27 September 1912
6 November 1912
15 December 1912